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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [MOPS](#) [PTER](#) [AF](#)
SUBJECT: LOGAR GOVERNOR TALKS OF NEEDED COOPERATION;
FAILURES OF AFGHAN GOVERNMENT

Classified By: PRT and Sub-National Governance Counselor Valerie C. Fowler for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Logar Provincial Governor Atiqullah Lodin shared a sober view about the direction of Afghanistan governance and security, lamenting that the Government of Afghanistan is becoming increasingly weak. He predicted that President Karzai will be reelected despite increases in corruption, violence, and unemployment, because the general population is politically uneducated. He criticized the weakness of policing in Logar and expressed interest in standing up an Afghanistan Public Protection Program (APPP) as a means to enhance community policing. Lodin was realistic about the value of Coalition targeting operations against the Taliban and other insurgents, but warned that intelligence information from Afghans should always be viewed skeptically to determine motive. End Summary.

Elections and President Karzai

¶2. (C) In a free-ranging discussion between Task Force (TF) Spartan military Commander, State Department Regional Representative and Logar Province Governor Lodin, the Governor shared his views on political developments, recent military operations, policing, and the direction of the Afghan nation. On elections, Governor Lodin sees two overall camps forming for the upcoming elections: those who oppose the United States and those who support it but are not active players in Afghanistan, such as former Interior Minister Ali Jalali, and former Finance Minister Ashraf Ghani. Lodin said Jalali called him earlier in the week asking for his support, but Lodin had responded that he was not ready to get involved in politicking and wished Jalali luck. Lodin opined that the general population is politically uneducated, and will therefore likely reelect Karzai simply because they know his name. This, despite the fact that corruption, violence and jobs have gotten worse under Karzai.

¶3. (C) On Nangarhar Governor Sherzai's candidacy, Lodin said "he is OK" but does not believe Sherzai is on board with "what we are trying to accomplish constitutionally or otherwise." TF commander jokingly asked if Lodin was thinking of throwing his hat into the presidential ring. Lodin replied, also joking, "The Afghan people believe that whomever the Americans want they can make him president. So, if you want me there, I,m your guy!" TF Commander replied that the U.S. is not going to promote any candidate but wants to help ensure a free and fair election.

¶4. (C) Lodin believes one of Karzai's failures is that he has created a system in which government institutions work against one another. He clarified that Karzai does not actively try to do the wrong things for Afghanistan, but that

he has taken favors from people who expect favors in return. He cited Karzai's close relationship with the first Vice President of Afghanistan Zia Massoud, former president of Afghanistan Burhanuddin Rabbani, and Member of Parliament Abdul Sayyaf, saying these individuals' political agendas are shaped by behind-the-scenes players, often other countries. According to Lodin, Rabbani's support base is Iran, while Sayyaf's is Saudi Arabia.

15. (C) Lodin, who frequently peppers his comments with witty advice, said of Karzai "you are the average of the five people you spend the most time with - and that is why no one knows who Karzai really is" and that "Karzai is like a puppet getting played by everyone." Lodin believes the Afghan government does not function and "is getting torn apart from the inside out." He said the Taliban has not become stronger, but that the Afghan government has become weaker. "We have more than 40 nations helping Afghanistan. What else do you want? But we are making the Taliban look good. If Karzai can't get things right now, when can he?"

Policing Challenges in Logar; Seeks APPP

16. (C) Governor Lodin said that policing in Logar is weak and suggested that the recently established Afghan Public Protection Program (APPP) in Wardak province was needed to help strengthen Logar's police force. He said the APPP would protect the villages by ensuring that security members are from the area in which they are assigned. This, he said, stands in stark contrast with the current Logar police, the majority of whom are not from the province and are Tajik.

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(The majority of Logar's population is Pashtun.) In response to a question from TF Spartan Commander on who should moderate an upcoming USG-hosted Logar and Wardak police summit bringing together national, provincial and district police leadership, Lodin said the coalition should tee up questions and issues in order to help the district police chiefs speak up since they may be timid with their leadership in the room. The governor specifically mentioned that the tashkil (manning level) for police throughout the province is very low and many of the district police chiefs will want to raise this issue.

17. (C) Lodin also said provincial police chief, BG Ghulam Mustafa, may react negatively to the meeting, "since it will force him to work" and may reveal some corruption on his part. He pointed out that the recent increase in U.S. presence has spurred the provincial police to start working, although it is still not enough. For example, if Mustafa is fired, Lodin said, the police Mustafa hired would likely leave with him. Lodin predicted that Mustafa could be removed within a couple of weeks if his powerful supporters at the Ministry of Interior (MOI), especially Burhanuddin Rabbani, do not come to his aid. (Comment: The governor recognizes that he does not have the authority to remove the chief of police and lobbied the MOI in Kabul to remove Mustafa.)

Targeting Operations

18. (C) Lodin claimed he does not oppose military targeting operations in Logar, recognizing that they "get rid of some very bad people." Lodin differentiated between two "enemies" that must be overcome. The first, he said, are the Taliban, but the second is more 'indirect' and difficult to address, referring to 'criminal' elements in the government that undermine progress in Logar. The governor himself has come under political pressure from Kabul and throughout the province following some of these joint Afghan and Coalition operations, but continues to support them. He dismissed as political rhetoric accusations that he takes sides with Tajiks or Pashtuns or is too close to CF. He pointed out,

though, that sometimes "by removing one enemy, we strengthen another." Lodin noted his responsibility to calm the population by combating rumors associated with operations. Comment: Initially some of the governor's public comments were not supportive of CF operations, saying that innocent civilians were targeted, but the PRT has taken corrective measures to the extent possible to make sure the governor is informed on who was targeted and why. End Comment.

The Politics of Intelligence

¶9. (C) The governor warned PRT leaders about the politics behind intelligence and other sources of information and told them not to take information at face value. Lodin cautioned the CF to question the source and hidden motives behind any intelligence gained from Afghan sources, specifically alleging that third countries collect information through the National Defense Services (NDS). He also suggested that, "If you are looking for an unbiased view, go and ask the poor man in Azra who is not involved in politics. Don,t go to Kabul." (Azra is the deep outback of Logar province.) Lodin added that more than half of the Afghan Army and police do not want the U.S. in Afghanistan, and rhetorically asked why this should be the case eight years after the start of the war. He said, "They may shake your hand and give you tea but many are actively acting against you." Lodin concluded this point by warning the meeting participants to "be watchful of government actors that are trying to impede our progress."

¶10. (U) The Task Force Commander has seen this cable.
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